

MAHATMA GANDHI

AND

ONE WORLD

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY,
KAKASAHEB KALELKAR, J.B. KRIPALANI, R.R. DIWAKAR,
HUMAYUN KABIR, NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE



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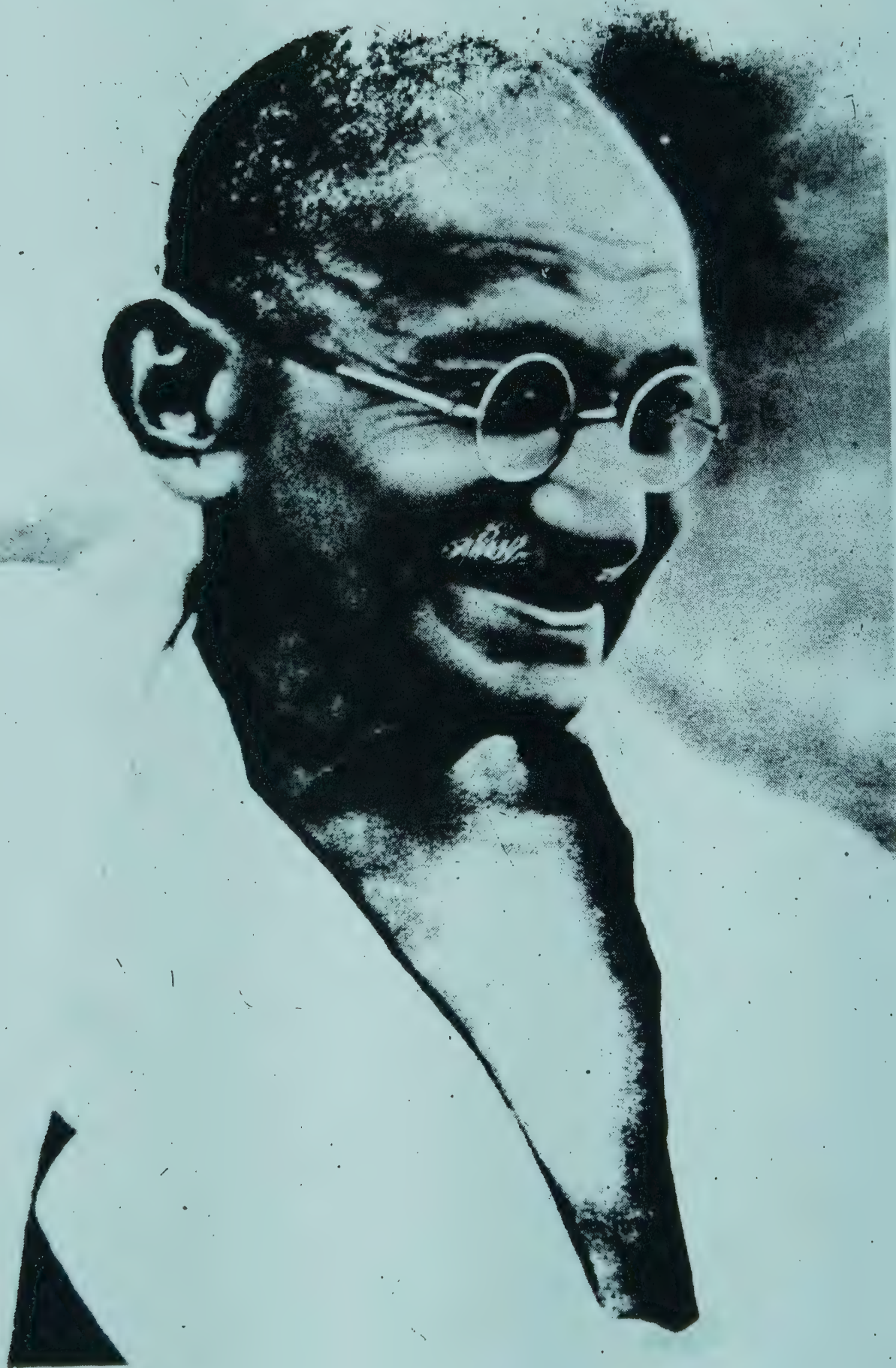
INTRODUCTION

Each birthday of Mahatma Gandhi reminds us of the immortal yearning of man for peace and brotherhood transcending differences of language, race, religion, nationality or way of life. Gautama Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, all tried to bring about peace and One World but man has still not realised this ideal. Others, conquerors and victors, tried to bring about One World by the sword, and they failed. In our century, at last, people have realised the need for a world organisation and the United Nations is its greatest expression.

This publication is dedicated to a great man like Gandhi, to the immanent belief of people everywhere in One World and to the need for making it a reality.

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DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

The United Nations Organisation symbolises the hopes and aspirations of the people of the world for a central authority which can control the activities of all nations eventually. Science and technology have brought the world together and made it a single body. Economic systems are becoming interdependent. Intellectual ideas are circulating all over the world. And what is necessary, is to give a soul to this organisation which is shaping itself before our eyes.

We are the victims of a nationalist and a militarist kind of society, where nations are regarded as supreme and for achieving the aims and political ambitions of those nations, we hitherto resorted to the use of force, but we have come to the condition when the nation State has to be sub-ordinated to the larger concept of world community. Unless we are able to do it, unless we give up the use of force-intolerable, detestable and wicked in a world where nuclear weapons have developed-it will not be possible for us to bring about peace in this world.

What are we trying to do? It is a change in the minds of men that has to be brought about. We are still believing in the nation State and in the right to use force to have our own aims realized. These are the things which have us by the throat. Though we are members of this international community, though we call ourselves members of the United Nations, our loyalties are to our own nation States; they are not to the world as a whole, not to humanity as a whole. We must break away from the past. We must get out of the rut in which we have lived.

Gandhi once said: "I want my country to be free. I do not want a fallen and prostrate India. I want an India which is free and enlightened. Such an India, if necessary, should be prepared to die so that humanity may live"

Nationalism is not the highest concept. The highest concept is world community. It is that kind of world community to which we have to attach ourselves. It is unfortunate that we are still the victims of concepts which are outmoded, which are outdated, so to say. We are living in a new world, and in a new world, a new type of man is necessary, and unless we change our minds, change our hearts, it will not be possible for us to survive in this world.

The challenge that is open to us is survival or annihilation. It is easy for us to say, we wish to survive but what are we doing to bring about that survival? Are we prepared to surrender a fraction of our national sovereignty for the sake of a world order? Are we prepared to submit our disputes and quarrels to arbitration, to negotiation and settlement by peaceful methods? Have we set up a machinery by which peaceful changes could be easily brought about in this world? So long as we do not have it, it is no use merely talking of it.

The concept of One World must be implemented in every action of every nation, if that One World is to become established. I have no doubt that the world will become one. As I said the other day, it is in the mind of events, it is the will of the universe, it is the purpose of Providence. We are being led from state to state to the concept of one family on earth. If we are able to achieve it, we should do so by handling our own minds and hearts. Our task today is to deal with the souls of

men; it is there that the changes have to be brought about. Before outer organisations are established, inward changes have to take place. An outer crisis is a reflection of an inward chaos, and if the chaos inside the minds and hearts of men....is not removed, we cannot bring about a more satisfactory world order.

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY

Gandhiji is universally acknowledged as the greatest man of his age. The extraordinary thing about him is that he held no high office nor was he a statesman ruling the destinies of countries. Nevertheless, he towered above all such personalities. His greatness came from the realm of the spirit, his influence and unparalleled leadership from his universal love and faith in mankind. He drew his strength from what he termed 'soul force', an inner strength, and one cannot believe in it or non-violence without an abiding faith in the innate goodness lurking in all fellow beings. This is what made Gandhiji, a universal leader who served the world. "Mankind is one, seeing that all are equally subject to the moral law. All men are equal in God's eyes." It is not strange that Gandhiji should call his deity "Truth", for this term is universal, it is meaningful, and it is pregnant with manifold experiences and establishes friendly channels of communications with even those who may differ widely in policy and even in interest. Having established these links, he has also shown that local belonging and local ties, though they seemingly limit freedom of action, need not necessarily do so. In fact, he expounds: "Duties to self, to the family, to the country and to the world are not independent of one another. One can not do good to the country by injuring himself or his family. Similarly, one can not serve the country by injuring the world at large. In the final analysis, we must die that the family may live, the family must die that the country may live and the country must die that the world may live. But only pure things can be offered in sacrifice. Therefore, self-purification is



the first step. When the heart is pure, we at once realize what is our duty at every moment”

He never conceived of freedom and independence for India in narrow, exclusive sense as his assertions prove: “My notion of Purna Swaraj is not isolated independence but healthy and dignified interdependence. My nationalism, fierce though it is, is not exclusive, not designed to harm any nation or individual. Legal maxims are not so legal as they are moral. I believe in the eternal truth of ‘*sic utere tuo ut alienum non loedas*’ (use thy own property so as not to injure thy neighbours). Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations in as much as we will exploit none, just as we will allow none to exploit us. Through *Swaraj* we would serve the whole world.”

Again, he reiterates: “It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when peoples belonging to different countries have organised themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations, which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruins of the other.

“I am a humble servant of India and in trying to serve India, I serve humanity at large... After nearly fifty years of public life, I am able to say today that my faith in the doctrine that the service of one’s nation is not inconsistent with the service of the world has grown. It is a good doctrine. Its acceptance alone will ease the situation in the world and stop the mutual jealousies between nations inhabiting this globe of ours”.

Gandhiji has been unique in history in many respects. But his most outstanding contribution lies in his supreme achievement of transforming the principles of non-violent resistance into a successful instrument for achieving liberty, justice and peace. What was once just a personal discipline, he elevated into a social technique for community or national emancipation. Gandhiji's approach to the wider social and political strains and tensions rested on a basic social harmony which assumed a fundamental unity between all peoples and classes and rejected completely the inevitability of violent confrontations and clashes. He had a convincing confidence of being able to touch the higher and finer side of man and bend him to modulations and adjustments without calling in the power of the State. Thereby, he offered the alternative of a genuine doctrine of co-existence which has become so significant and strategic in the world affairs of today. The socialism of several of the new rising countries also tends to be based more on national unity than on class warfare.

Yet, he did stand exactly for a Stateless world. He believed in sovereignty in terms of an authority which directed the national community through democratic process, that is, 'consent'. The relationship between States also, therefore, emerged from a mutual identity, common interest and purpose basic to all human existence. Military or similar alliances and expansionist actions are ruled out. The emphasis is on the 'right conduct' between fellow States.

However, the inter-State relationship was based on the internal values and domestic social patterns. In this context, the stress Gandhiji put on his constructive programmes becomes clear and meaningful. In fact, he declared it as essential to the

struggle for freedom. “We can never reach *Swaraj* with the poison of untouchability corroding the Hindu part of the national body”, he proclaimed. To him, freedom conveyed a state where such indignities and religious animosities ceased to exist, and internal harmony, which meant a discipline that had transformed hatred into friendliness, confrontation into co-operation, distrust into trust prevailed. A mere shedding of colonial rule to him was an illusory freedom, a meaningless term.

Gandhiji has been hailed as a social scientist and an unusual one, for he generally made the first test of his hypothesis on himself before he commended it to others. He was a class apart in this as in other ways. An unerring instinct in the choice of the problems, a persistence and thoroughness in research, and a rare skill in organising made a perfect combination in him. It has been said that a reformer’s business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration in his own conduct. Perhaps, in his case, the old Sanskrit saying ‘Power does not come to a man because he does things that are hard, but because he does things with a pure heart’ could be very aptly applied.

Gandhiji’s great contribution lay in his opening up before the world, a new way of life, the path of peace if one may call it, a method of combating in a creative and constructive way, aggression and exploitation in inter-group, as in international relations. His constant references to the world beyond India prove that he believed his beliefs and techniques were equally applicable to the rest of the world as to India. He declared at the Asian Conference in Delhi, his confidence that the fragrance of non-violence would permeate the whole world.

Some have raised a point whether Gandhiji's being an Indian did not make it easier for him to fashion this technique in relation to the indigenous people and environment. But experience has shown that his philosophy and example are equally valid for all human beings and the forces he invokes are deeper than cultural or social, and function at a more basic level. In a way our daily lives testify to this truth, for it is a physical as much as an emotional experience. For, a common bond draws us towards the same objectives and inspires us to the same ideals. There is an identity in our human interests. That is why a tragedy, wherever it may have taken place, fills us with sorrow just as a triumph or success fills us with joy.

"All that produces ties of sentiment between man and man must serve as an antidote to war", said Sigmund Freud. It is this bond of identification that brings out the essential resemblance between men, the sense of closeness and oneness with the larger community that Gandhiji tried to stimulate and stress. In truth, the entire edifice of human society is founded on this.

In this context, there is faith in the assumption that the opponent or the erring party is redeemable, negotiations between the conflicting sides, possible, and the unadjusted adjustable. Nevertheless, in Gandhiji's scheme of things, there are situations and factors that could not be compromised. In fact one may say that non-resolvable matters are integral to the Gandhian strategy, like, for instance colonialism, colour or caste or religious discrimination. The Gandhian technique, employed where bargaining was not possible, was pacific but involving active sacrifices. "Abstract truth has no value for me", said Gandhiji, "unless it incarnates in human beings who represent it by proving their readiness to die for it".

The Gandhian strategy of social dissent, though historically not new, gained special significance as it came to be more widely adopted in more recent times. During World War II, several of the subject peoples under Nazi rule employed it and even if they did not always win political success, certainly generated moral fervour and a sense of inner satisfaction that moral assertion brings. In recent years, the struggle in the United States for Civil Rights claims to be fashioned on a similar pattern. But for *Satyagraha* to be an alive, effective weapon, creativity, not rigidity, is essential.

Closely linked with this, was Gandhiji's concept of religion as an all pervasive influence, not a matter of deities, worship and rituals. His was a basic religion that could become the common faith of all. The very fact that devout Christians and ministers of the Church would seek him for inspiration and guidance was proof enough of his universal faith that could enfold all.

"The better mind of the world desires today", said Gandhiji, "not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly, interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence.

"Nor have I the slightest difficulty in agreeing that in these days of rapid inter-communication and growing consciousness of oneness of all mankind, we must recognise that our nationalism must not be inconsistent with progressive

internationalism. India cannot stand in isolation and unaffected by what is going on, in other parts of the world. We should therefore range ourselves with the progressive forces of the world.

“We want freedom for our country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, and not to degrade other countries. I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilised for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so, country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism or my idea of nationalism, is that my country may become free, that if need be, the whole country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race- hatred there. Let that be our nationalism.

“There is no limit to extending our services to our neighbours across Statemade frontiers. God never made those frontiers.

“My goal is friendship with the whole world and I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong.

“For me, patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. Imperialism has no

place in my scheme of life. The law of a patriot is not different from that of the patriach. And a patriot is so much the less a patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian. There is no conflict between private and political law.

“I would not like to live in this world if it is not to be One World”.

It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when peoples belonging to different countries have organised themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations, which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruin of, the other. Indian nationalism has struck a different path. It wants to organise itself..for the benefit and service of humanity at large.

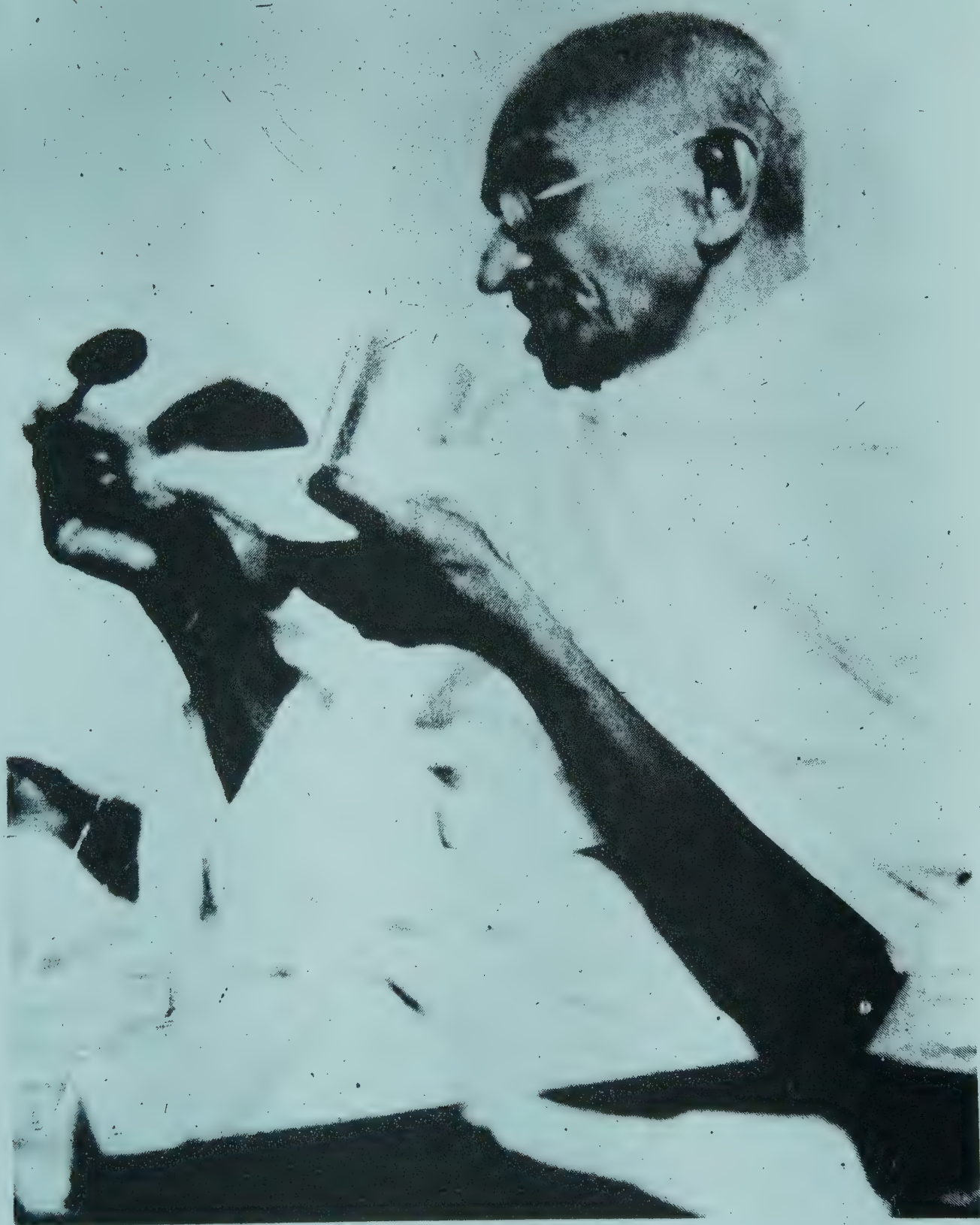
—MAHATMA GANDHI

KAKASAHEB KALELKAR

“Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man”, remarked Gandhiji once.

This *obiter dictum* of the Mahatma is the key to the whole of his political philosophy. It was his abiding faith in religion that impelled him to take to politics. In answer to a question put to him by Wedgewood Benn, the then British Secretary of State for India, Gandhiji explained his position in a similar strain: “You are right, Mr. Benn, I am a man of religion; but you cannot say that I have strayed into politics. A man of religion has to fight irreligion wherever found, and in the present age, irreligion has made politics its greatest stronghold. I must, therefore, enter politics to fight irreligion.” I may not be absolutely accurate as regards the words used, but this was, in essence, what Gandhiji said.

And what was Gandhiji’s religion? “Of course, Hinduism”, he would have said. But his Hinduism was not the historical or traditional Hinduism; much less that which passes for religion at the time of communal frenzy. “My religion has no geographical boundaries”, he has explained, “If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself”. It was this kind of Hinduism that taught him to believe absolutely in the soul and rely solely on soul-force for fighting all the ills in human hearts or in human society. Truth for him was God. And non-violence or soul-force, his only means of fighting the ills of life. And soul with Gandhiji, it must be noted, was the Universal



Soul, to be realized by the saint and the sinner alike; the soul that resides in man and beast. Indeed, Gandhiji felt kinship with the whole of the sentient creation.

It did not require a systematic study or special effort on the part of Gandhiji to come to accept the concept of One World as the ultimate goal of humanity. It came naturally to him to regard the entire sentient creation as one family. He had learnt, as a child, the ancient aphorism:

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघु चेतसाम् ।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ।

(Only men of little minds make a distinction, saying, “This one is my kinsman, the other is a stranger”, To the greathearted ones, the whole world is but a compact family)

Gandhiji was not a nationalist in the narrow sense in which the word is used. He was at pains to explain to a European internationalist once, that his (Gandhiji's) nationalism was in reality intense internationalism. “Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations in as much as we will exploit none, just as we allow none to exploit us.”

Gandhiji knew that the immediate mission before him was to free India from the British yoke. He realised that he could not serve the world unless he took the whole of India with him; and India could not fulfil her mission until she was free herself. The cause of India thus meant to him the cause of the whole humanity. That is why during the bitterest days of our struggle for freedom, Gandhiji had the good of Britain as much

as the good of India at heart. "A country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love therefore of nationalism, or my idea of nationalism, is that my country may become free, that if need be, the whole country may die, so that human race may live. There is no race-hatred there. Let that be our nationalism.

A study of Gandhiji's writings and speeches makes it clear that One World and World Peace were inherent in his philosophy of life. This was evident to those of us who had the good fortune to be his humble associates in the Ashram where we watched him live his philosophy of life. In 1915 (or was it 1916?), when he promised to help the British Commonwealth in its war against Germany, he told me (because I had responded to Gandhiji's appeal and volunteered to join the army), that one of our aims in helping the British was to save Germany from being totally crushed by the Allies after her defeat. "Only by helping Britain now can we earn the right to sit at the Peace Conference and, as honourable and loyal allies, tell the British that the Germans were after all their cousins and we have to learn to live together as One World".

Gandhiji was once invited to visit Finland. He had accepted the invitation, but the visit did not materialise. When the contemplated visit was being discussed, I asked Gandhiji casually if he would have enough time to study the problems of Finland vis-a-vis the European situation. Gandhiji said that he did not worry about that at all. The people who had invited him would explain the problems to him; and as for the remedy it was a 'sovereign, universal remedy that he had with him. "Our objective is One World; we have to work for it and for the

brotherhood of all humanity. Our only ultimate weapon in our fight is non-violence or soul-force.”

Having been fully aware of Gandhiji’s ideals, I once asked him why, during all his years in South Africa, he did not actively champion the cause of the liberation of the Africans themselves. Gandhiji’s reply was characteristic. “That only shows my self restraint”, he said, “I would never take up a cause unless I felt myself equal to it. We Indians in South Africa were ourselves in a wretched state, a helpless lot. We had to struggle for our very existence there. If I had championed the cause of Africans, it would not have helped them at all at that time, as they were not ready in any way. My championship of their cause would only have complicated my own task and made it almost insurmountable. I was convinced that if I succeeded in securing justice for our people there through non-violence., it would set a silent object lesson to the Africans. I was quite sure that such a lesson would not be lost on the Africans.”

Gandhiji’s opposition to the partition of India was also based on his firm belief in the concept of Open World. As one who believed in the brotherhood of humanity, he could never accept the thesis that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations. As a man of compromise, he may have accepted what happened, but there was no compromise with his ideals, his basic philosophy or his faith in the ultimate goal of the whole humanity. “Isolated independence is not the goal of the world States. It is voluntary interdependence”, he has said. And again. “There is no limit to extending our services to our neighbours across the State-made frontiers. God never made frontiers”.

The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States worring one against another, but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence.

*

My goal is friendship with the world and I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong.

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The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs.

—MAHATMA GANDHI



J.B. KRIPALANI

Gandhiji, though he worked for the freedom of the Indian nation from foreign yoke, was a citizen of the world. He considered humanity as one. However, his citizenship of the world was not of the variety of certain highly cultured individuals, who are found in modern times in many countries, and who have reasoned themselves out of narrow national and parochial loyalties. Most of them are not normally concerned with the affairs of the world or those of the country wherein they happen to be born. However, such intellectuals have rarely been able to rise above their national loyalties at the time of any great stress or strain; for instance, during and after the First World War, many intellectuals in Europe and America declared themselves as pacifists and against all wars, but under the strain of world War II, they could not rise above their national loyalties and joined the conflict in support of their respective governments. I am not discussing here the tightness of the cause of the Allies as against the Fascists and the Nazis. Gandhiji's universalism was based on firmer grounds than that of the intellectuals. It was based upon certain fundamental moral and spiritual concepts. He believed in the Vedantic doctrine that the whole world is one family; *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. We are all of the family of God, or, as the Bible says 'Ye are one of another'. We cannot, therefore, injure others without injuring ourselves. From this conception flowed Gandhiji's doctrine of truth and non-violence.

Why then did he work for the emancipation of a section of humanity? This he did for various reasons. He knew that the

nation as the family is a fact of life, which cannot be ignored. It was based on certain commonly held conceptions which created certain emotional ties and loyalties as in the family. But as the loyalty to the family does not conflict with the loyalty to the nation, so loyalty to the nation need not conflict with loyalty to humanity.

Also, average men and women can serve humanity through serving their neighbours. Even exceptional persons and reformers serve humanity, beginning their work in their own community or nation. Their message may be of universal application, but they have to express it in the form which would be understood by their people. For instance, Krishna could not have kept the teachings of the Gita in the form in which he has done, in Palestine or Arabia; if he had done so, few would have understood it. The non-violence of the Buddha and Mahavir could best be understood in their own community, even though it was of the same nature as that preached by Christ. If the New Testament had been kept before the people of India without the background of the Old Testament, it would not have had much meaning for them. When Gandhiji was approached by foreigners to deliver his message of truth and non-violence in their land, he always said, "I must make good here (in India) first"

If therefore, men have to serve humanity, they can do so most conveniently and effectively through their immediate neighbours. But they need not serve them in a manner which causes injury to their more distant neighbours. If they do so, it would mean that they do not consider humanity as one family. Man's service to be universal wherever it may begin, must be

rendered, according to Gandhiji, on the principle of truth and non-violence which need injure nobody. Gandhiji believed that wherever there is violence, untruth will creep in sooner or later. One, therefore, cannot truly serve one's neighbour unless one is non-violent. Even the great *Yogi*. Sri Krishna under the stress of war had to abandon his pledge of not taking up arms in the great war of *Mahabharata*. If human beings are of one family, they cannot afford to engage in mortal combat. They have to settle their disputes through good understanding and compromise, without doing violence to truth, justice and fairplay. If, however, conflict became inevitable, Gandhiji prescribed *Satyagraha*. In non-violent resistance or non-cooperation, he believed that there could be no defeat for either side. No side would suffer the humiliation of defeat.

There was yet another aspect of Gandhiji's nationalism which made it consistent with the love of mankind. He often said that the slavery of India was a danger to its neighbours. This is historically true. Many countries in the East and West of India were subjugated by the British with Indian resources and soldiers. Gandhiji believed that a slave nation in the world is like a diseased limb of the body. Unless it is cured, it injures the whole body. He, therefore, worked to cure the diseased limb of humanity. He often said that he worked for the freedom of India so that, if need be, free India may sacrifice itself as a nation for the good of humanity. His patriotism was of the highest order. It was all-comprehensive. It was true both to the nation and to humanity. He said, "For me, patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane and a patriot is so much less a patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian". Once, in my presence, a distinguished visitor

from England, among other questions, asked Gandhiji, “Would it not be correct to say that you as an Indian love the Indian people more than others!” quick came the reply, “No, I make no distinction between man and man. To me humanity is one”.

There have been in the past and in the present age, many leaders of humanity who have rightly considered themselves as citizens of the world. But there is a difference between them and Gandhiji. The former could never think that in the interest of humanity a nation may sacrifice itself. Gandhiji was prepared for such a sacrifice. He said that as an individual sacrifices himself for the good of the family and the family for the village, the village for the district and the district for the province and the province for the nation, “even so a country has to be free in order that it may die if necessary for the benefit of the world”. In such a sacrifice the nation will find its glory and fulfilment. This conception can only come to a person who is not only a revolutionary but one who has the spiritual belief that no sacrifice is in vain. Also, in regard to this, Gandhiji believed that moral conduct should be the same for groups and nations as individuals. If truth and non-violence are desirable in the conduct of individuals towards each other, they must be so in inter-group and international relations. He says that there is no conflict between private and political morality. If sacrifice is a law of life for the individual, it must be so in the case of the nation. He says, “I saw that nations like individuals could only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way”.

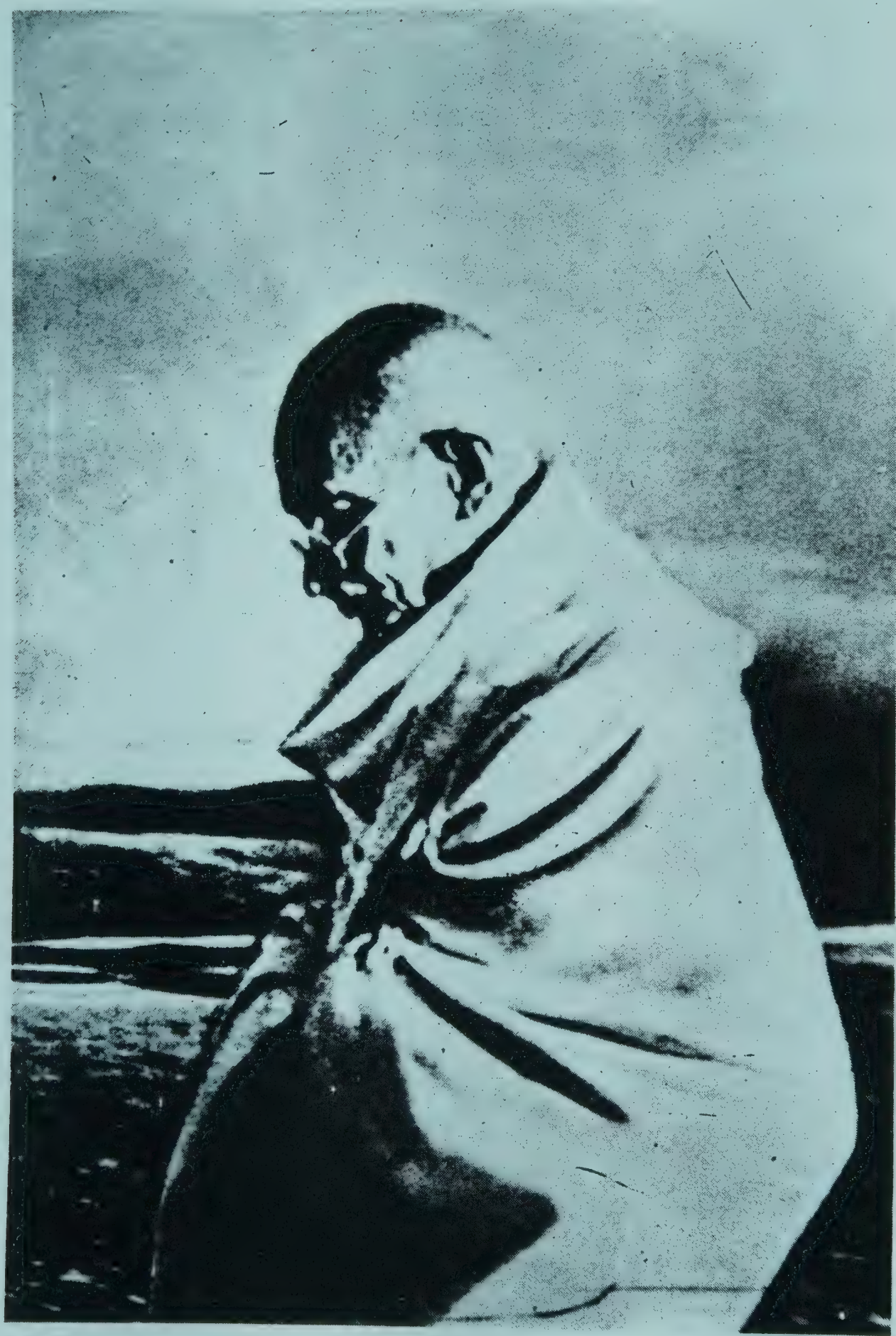
We must also remember that sacrifice for Gandhiji did not mean something that is painful. He used the word sacrifice as is used in the *Gita*, ‘*Yajna*’. It says, “Prajapati, the Lord of

Creation, having manifested the Universe through *Yajna*, "said. 'Ye shall live by this and may this be your milch cow (cow of plenty)'"'. *Yajna* according to the Gita is not a denial but a fulfilment. It is through such sacrifice (*Yajna*) that humanity has progressed through the ages. An individual sacrificing himself for the nation does not feel pain but some kind of joy and exhilaration; so it must be when sacrifice is made for a worthy cause. Gandhiji says, "Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself".

R.R. DIWAKAR

The concept of One World is fascinating indeed. Behind every attempt at permanent world peace and even in the background of world organisations, such as the 'League of Nations and the United Nations Organisation, there lurks the hope that one day there will be One World. Whatever the shape of that One World, we all hope that war as an instrument of solving conflicts of interests shall have no longer any place in human affairs. Instead, there will be peaceful ways of resolving conflicts—through friendliness and mutual help and co-operation towards common ends. One World and World Peace are practically synonymous. Neither of them can exist without the other. The strong desire and the frequent attempts for both are rooted in the hunger of the human heart for peace and happiness.

How heartening it is to imagine that when there is One World, all the natural and human resources, all the sciences and technology which are today being marshalled and arrayed for destructive purposes will be used for the elimination of poverty, ill-health and ignorance. They shall be used for promoting goodwill and for creating better conditions of life for the whole of humanity. Though this rosy picture is today the privilege only of the poets and the dream of idealists, there is no doubt that this is the cherished hope of every one who strives for peace. It has been the living faith of persons like Gandhi. He once wrote: "Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature".



Both World Peace and One World are inherent in Gandhi's philosophy and the Gandhian way of life. He believed in Truth and for him Truth was God. Man may deny the existence of God. Very many have an agnostic attitude. But none dare deny Truth, though people may have different conceptions about particular truths. Truth is a matter of experience, an experience to which one is himself a witness. To deny Truth would be to deny one's own existence. But what was far more important in the case of Gandhi was his declaration that "there is no way to find Truth except the way of non-violence". Gandhi's non-violence was not merely an ethical principle nor a temporary policy. His non-violence was a positive principle, the principle of love which springs from the inner experience of the identity of interest with those whom we love. He once declared, "All life is one", for him life meant not only human beings, but all sentient creatures. He said, "Non-violence is not a mechanical thing. You do not become non-violent by merely saying, 'I shall not use force. It must be felt in the heart... when there is that feeling it will express itself through some action'" That action, for Gandhi, was ceaseless service of mankind. His constructive approach to life, his whole constructive programme of action for the betterment of human life at all levels, arose out of his intense love, his deep sense of identity with all life and with the whole of humanity. "My constructive programme is rooted in non-violence", he said.

For Gandhi, man was the measure of all things. The basic purpose of human life was to reach higher and yet higher levels of consciousness; man was mind and consciousness more than body and the senses. Therefore, Gandhi emphasised the spiritual progress of man. He carried on a relentless quest of

Truth, of the Truth of life, of the laws and discipline necessary for elevating the human soul. He came to the conclusion that love was the law of the human species and not violence which seemed to reign supreme in the animal kingdom. He saw that truthfulness and non-violent adherence to it through thick and thin strengthened the human soul. Purification of the mind by purging selfishness and strengthening of it by selfless service was a positive step in developing soulpower. It was this kind of developed soul-force which he hurled against all evil and injustice which he came across.

Gandhi realized that if the embodied human spirit was to progress, muffled as it was by selfish desires, man must be free, full of dignity, and earnest about his own advance. Socially, all men and women, irrespective of caste, creed, or sex must be equal and be given equal opportunities. Thus he conceived a world in which all would be equal and all would uphold the dignity of each and help achieve spiritual progress.

Seemingly, his earlier life and youthful energy were devoted to the cause of equal rights for Indian residents in South Africa. After coming to India, he engaged himself mainly in the struggle for Indian independence. But never for a moment was the cause of the whole of humanity or of world peace and harmony out of his mind. In fact, Tolstoy, in one of his letters to Gandhi while he was fighting for the rights of Indians in Transvaal, wrote that what Gandhi was doing in Transvaal was of world significance. He referred to the purity of the means which Gandhi adopted to fight evil which in south Africa had taken the form of racial injustice. Gandhi too was well aware of his mission in life, that of 'peace on earth and goodwill unto men. He wrote in *Young India* (12-1-1928), "My

ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heel of Western exploitation...India's coming into her own will mean every nation doing likewise”.

This has proved prophetic!

He wrote more expressly on this subject many times. He said, “Through the realization of freedom of India, I hope to realize and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man”. There has been no greater advocate of one humanity in One World, and no stronger opponent of violence and war than Gandhi, for, his faith in non-violence was absolute and he believed that peaceful means alone could lead to peaceful ends.

Hatred (some people argue) cannot be turned into love. Those who believed in violence will naturally use it by saying, “Kill your enemy, injure him and his property wherever you can, whether openly or secretly as necessity requires”. The result will be deeper hatred and counter-hatred and vengeance let loose on both sides. The recent war, whose embers have yet hardly died, loudly proclaims the bankruptcy of this use of hatred. And it remains to be seen whether the so-called victors have won or whether they have not depressed themselves in seeking and trying to depress their enemies.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

HUMAYUN KABIR

Gandhiji was born at a time when the fortunes of not only India but of the whole of the East were in their nadir. In India, the last attempt of the Moghul Empire and its adherents to revive past glory was defeated after the outbreak of 1857. In the Middle East, Turkey was regarded as the sick man of Europe, and her empire was in process of disintegration. In the Far East, new burdens had been imposed upon China after the failure of the Boxer risings. The triumph of the new imperialism of Europe was evident on all sides, and Eastern peoples were for the first time feeling as if there was something inevitable in the supremacy of the West. Forgotten were the days of barely two centuries ago when it was Asia that was triumphant.

By the time Gandhiji died, this mood of despondency had vanished. In its place was a new expectancy and hope, and the East was claiming her rightful place in the mansions of Man. Not a little of the credit for this transformation must belong to Gandhiji. He was chiefly instrumental in the restoration of the self-respect of the Indian people. He made the Indian masses feel a new sense of dignity. He taught them that in their endurance and patience were hidden enormous reserves of strength which not even the most powerful imperialism in history could overcome. By precept and even more by example, he infused in the Indian people a new consciousness of strength. The result of this awakening was not, however, confined only to India, but evoked a new thrill through all the farflung regions of the East.

The restoration of the self-respect of the people expressed



itself in a restoration of the values of spirituality. Gandhiji, while he recognised fully the contribution of science to the development of human happiness, proclaimed that science must be the servant of man and not his master. His protest was against materialism, but not against the utilisation of knowledge to ameliorate human conditions. While he condemned the use of machinery on a scale that reduced man to a mere slave of the machine, he recognised that the machine in its simpler forms was essential for human well being.

Gandhiji's deep sense of spirituality forged a new weapon of political warfare. He realized that violence can provoke only greater violence. Hatred cannot be overcome by hatred. It is love alone that can triumph over hate and violence. He therefore sought to fight an alien imperialism not by methods of violence, but by an appeal to its own conscience. His conception of non-violent, non-cooperation was not only superb strategy for an unarmed nation, it was also the declaration of a new political faith based on man's innate goodness and rationality. The withdrawal of British power from India is one of the most striking events in human history, for it has left in its wake, not hatred and bitterness but a feeling of friendliness and fellowship. Gandhiji will always be remembered as perhaps the first non-violent liberator of a nation.

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.

*

I see no poverty in the world of tomorrow, no wars, no revolutions, no bloodshed. And in that world there will be a faith in God greater and deeper than even in the past. The very existence of the world, in a broad sense, depends on religion. All attempts to root it out will fail.

—MAHATMA GANDHI



NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

A general belief is current among historians and political scientists that Gandhi was a “nationalist” leader, by which is meant that he tried to promote the interests of the rising bourgeoisie in India, those who are generous sometimes concede the point that he might have been concerned about the interests of the masses, but the way in which he worked with the Indian National Congress actually led to the promotion of the interests of the upper classes. Moreover, he was afraid of violence, and scotched the revolutionary zeal of the masses whenever their resistance tended to break out into violence. Indeed, violence is natural in the revolt of the masses against the classes. In opposing violence, Gandhi did not, infact, intend to promote the interests of the former in opposition to those of the latter.

This is a point of view which is, however, very far from correct.

As early as 1909, Gandhi once defined his idea of Indian freedom in a book entitled *Hind Swaraj* or Indian Home Rule. In it he wrote, “By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people, and if I could secure it in the hands of the English, I should bow down my head to them. If any Englishman dedicated his life to securing the freedom of India, resisting tyranny and serving the land, I should welcome that Englishman as an Indian”.

Long afterwards, in 1925, Gandhi defined his ideal more specifically in the following terms: “By *Swaraj* I mean the government of India by the vote of the largest number of the

adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. I hope also that real *Swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused". (Selections*, p. 114). "Mere withdrawal of the English", he wrote in 1931, "is not independence. It means the consciousness in the average villager that he is the maker of his own destiny, he is his own legislator through his chosen representatives". (Selections, p. 114).

Gandhi was firmly of the opinion that if violence were used instead of non-violence, power would eventually gravitate into the hands of a dominant minority who are in possession of the instruments of violence. This is a contingency which he wanted to guard against by always keeping the organisation of the masses within the bounds of non-violence.

While working with and through the Indian National Congress, he clearly defined *Purna Swaraj* as "full economic freedom for the toiling millions. It is no unholy alliance with any interest for their exploitation". (Selections, p. 106). At the Round Table Conference in London in 1931, while speaking as the sole representative of the Congress, he said again, "I will, therefore state the purpose. It is complete freedom from alien yoke in every sense of the term, and this for the sake of the dumb

'Quotations are from *Selections from Gandhi*, 1957, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.

millions. Every interest, therefore, that is hostile to their interest must be revised or must subside if it is not capable of revision" (Selections, p. 106).

At bottom, Gandhi can be regarded as an anarchist, believing more in voluntary organisation of the toiling millions rather than in the State. But as a practical man who believed in democratic institutions and shunned the idea of ever founding a political sect of his own, he tried to steer the ship of the Congress in a direction where it would commit itself to the organisation of the strength of the masses and to freedom.

In this respect, he worked as a universalist rather than as a narrow nationalist. And here also lies the secret of his real appeal among the masses. They trusted him, not because they believed in the magic of his personality or the magic of an "obscurantist philosophy", but because they sensed that here was a man who was one with them. He was one in whose leadership they dimly saw the hope of a power to come, which would enfranchise them and raise them to a status where they would feel equal to every other toiling human being across the so-called national boundaries'.

This was his call to the masses even when he was leading them in *Satyagraha* movements from 1920 onwards. "My religion has no geographical boundaries. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. "Isolated independence is not the goal of the world States. It is voluntary interdependence". "There is no limit to extending our services to our neighbours across State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers". (Selections, p. 42)

In a stirring speech delivered in 1925 in the city of Calcutta, he said, "We want freedom for our country, but not at the

expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilised for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so, a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love therefore of nationalism, or my idea of nationalism, is that my country may become free, that if need be, the whole country may die, so that the human race may live, there is no room for race-hatred there. Let that be our nationalism". (Selections, p. 42)

We thus realize that Gandhi was far from being a "nationalist" in the usual sense of the term, for he was above all a universalist, trying to find a way so that the toiling masses of mankind could learn to live and organise themselves as a single human family.

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This book is a thoughtful compilation of the views expressed by eminent personalities on the universal approach of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and way of life. They underline the fact that Gandhiji always considered the concept of world community as superior to nationalism. This is also clearly reflected in his notions of Purna Swaraj, Satyagraha and Ahimsa, which transcend the geographical boundaries and apply to the world community as a whole. The book brings out succinctly Gandhiji's philosophical approach to life which is based on the principle of betterment of the whole of humanity rather than a community alone.



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